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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 HANOI 000887

SENSITIVE  
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STATE FOR EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR, OES/STC, OES/IHA, MED, OGAC  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (STERN)  
HHS/OSSI/DSI PASS TO FIC/NIH (RGLASS) AND OGHA  
(WSTIEGER/LVALDEZDMILLER)  
USAID FOR ANE (CJENNINGS, MWARD) AND GH (KYAMASHITA, KHILL)  
CDC FOR COGH (SBLOUNT), CCID (SREDD) AND DIV-FLU(COX/MOHEN)  
USDA PASS TO APHIS, FAS (OSTA AND OCRA), FSIS  
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC (MMALISON), USAID (MACARTHUR/MBRADY/CBOWES),  
APHIS (NCARDENAS), REO (JWALLER)  
BEIJING FOR HHS HEALTH ATTACHE (BROSS)  
PHNOM PENH FOR CDC INFLUENZA COORDINATOR(BBRADY)  
ROME FOR FAO  
VIENTIANE FOR CDC INFLUENZA COORDINATOR (ACORWIN)

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [EAGR](#) [PINR](#) [KFLU](#) [VM](#)  
SUBJECT: VACCINATIONS AND MODERNIZATION - KEY COMPONENTS TO  
VIETNAM'S FIGHT AGAINST BIRD FLU

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11. (U) Summary: In three southern provinces looking to boost poultry production, local officials and businesses have focused on the development of large-scale modern poultry farms and comprehensive vaccination programs as the keys to avian influenza prevention efforts. Provincial officials proudly noted no human cases or animal outbreaks over the past three years. Thai-based multinational CP Group is working with local partners to create self-contained chicken and (eventually) duck farms that will reduce the risks of the spread of avian influenza. End Summary.

The Poultry Sector in Dong Nai, Binh Duong  
and Binh Phuoc Provinces  
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12. (U) Farmers in Dong Nai province, just north of Ho Chi Minh City, raise five to six million chickens per year. Noting that ducks appear to be better suited as avian influenza carriers than chickens, Dong Nai has not promoted duck production, with only a fairly small (60,000 to 250,000) number of ducks raised in the province. Dong Nai has focused on large-scale farms with a relatively small percentage of poultry (less than 20 percent) raised

in backyard farms. Their counterparts in bordering Binh Duong province raise approximately two million birds per year, of which 1.2 million are raised in commercial farms. Backyard farms remained a custom for locals and officials doubted their ability to give it up. Binh Phuoc province along the Cambodian border has about 1.3 million birds, though that number can go as high as two million or as low as one million. Most birds in Binh Phuoc are raised in backyard farms or mid-sized open farms with only five self-contained (or "closed") commercial facilities.

#### Master Plans for Development of the Poultry Sector

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¶3. (SBU) While Dong Nai already has a thriving commercial poultry sector, Binh Duong and Binh Phuoc provincial officials stressed their intention to develop industrial husbandry, made explicit in the provinces' master plans for poultry raising. Binh Phuoc has set a target for 2020 of 90 percent of all poultry raised in self-contained commercial farms. Each province targets foreign investors, who already control many of the commercial facilities. Dong Nai's master poultry plan has moved beyond simply promoting commercial production and contains detailed restrictions on the locations of commercial farms, while providing investment incentives to lease land and build infrastructure for commercial farms. Dong Nai would like to mandate high-tech husbandry techniques, but worries that few traditional farmers could afford the initial investments.

#### Pros and (Few) Cons of Self-Contained Commercial Farms

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¶4. (SBU) According to provincial officials, large scale, commercial farms typically had higher awareness of avian influenza, were easier to monitor and more receptive to technical assistance for avian

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influenza protection. The Binh Duong Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) noted that the profit motive caused larger commercial farms to protect their flocks and recognize the importance of good hygiene. Dong Nai official highlighted better compliance with biosafety requirements. On the downside, Binh Duong officials stated that larger, open farms could cause environmental problems, particularly if sited near residential areas (Note: Binh Phuoc officials thought that commercial farms had no downside). Dong Nai officials stated that while modern, self-contained farms provide the best protection against the spread of avian influenza, their price tag, roughly one billion Dong (approximately USD 60,000) for facilities that can handle 10,000 poultry at a time, may be too expensive for many poultry farmers.

#### Vaccinations a Key Part of Anti-Avian Influenza Efforts

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¶5. (SBU) Authorities in each province enthusiastically supported the animal vaccination program, which they viewed as key to the effort to contain avian influenza, particularly among small backyard flocks still common in their jurisdictions. Dong Nai animal health officials stated that the province would continue animal vaccinations regardless of central government backing. Each province implements biannual vaccination programs (on slightly different timetables) that cover the large majority of poultry. Binh Duong animal health officials estimated that the vaccination program covered approximately 90 percent of poultry raised in the province. Unlike Binh Duong, Binh Phuoc only managed to vaccinate about 60 percent of its chickens each year and officials noted difficulties reaching some of the smaller backyard flocks. Dong Nai officials generally noted high vaccination rates, but did not provide specific figures. In each province, the central government funds the vaccinations (using a Chinese vaccine) for backyard flocks, while commercial farms must pay for their vaccinations (observed by local Department of Animal Health (DAH) officials). The provinces pay the salaries of the vaccinators from their DAHs and typically purchase much of the necessary equipment. Each province claims to monitor the effectiveness of vaccinations (Dong Nai estimated about 80 percent success, while Binh Phuoc stated about 60 percent). Dong Nai, which appeared to have the best

organized strategy, stated that it would order revaccinations if it detected antibodies in less than 70 percent of vaccinated birds.

#### Other Strategies

¶16. (U) Our interlocutors emphasized other measures that they had taken to minimize the avian influenza threat. Each noted public awareness campaigns, particularly targeted at those who raised small backyard flocks, along with strong links to district and commune authorities. Each emphasized that the Vice-Chair of the Provincial People's Committee chaired the provincial avian influenza steering committee, with deputy chairs from the Departments of Health and the Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development. They also noted regional efforts among bordering provinces. For example, thirteen southern provinces surrounding Ho Chi Minh City, led by Region six

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of the Vietnam Department of Animal Health, had signed a cooperative agreement on transportation control, information sharing and notification in case of any outbreaks. Local officials also emphasized their attempts to eliminate free-range flocks - even among backyard farmers -- and ensure that all flocks were located in rural areas, outside the heavily populated cities.

#### The New Breed: Visits to Self-Contained Chicken Farms

¶17. (SBU) Visits to two commercial chicken farms showed modern facilities and biosecurity practices designed to protect chickens from avian influenza. CP Group, the giant Thai conglomerate funding these sites, also is piloting a large-scale duck farm and hopes to develop similar modern facilities for duck raising in Vietnam in the near future. As part of this plan, CP hopes to finance the construction of 1,000 commercial farms - some modern, closed facilities and other, smaller and open facilities, designed to raise poultry for the domestic market. However, before commencing this major expansion, CP wants to ensure that Vietnam maintains its strong avian influenza prevention programs.

¶18. (SBU) In 2007, following consultation with local DAH officials, the Thuy Tao Cooling Chicken farm in Binh Phuoc province was sited in the middle of a rubber plantation, in order to better protect the environment and possible exposure to or spread of avian influenza. Costing 35 billion Dong (approximately USD 2.1 million), the farm can raise nearly 200,000 chickens per year. The owner plans to open a 200 billion Dong (approximately USD 12 million) facility nearby in 2010 that will be five times larger. The Mai Dinh Phon chicken farm in Dong Nai, constructed in 2006, raises 180,000 chickens per generation. In both cases, the local Vietnamese owners signed an agreement with CP Group, under which CP sends chicks recently hatched in an industrial zone in Bien Hoa to be raised for 45 days prior to shipment to a CP processing facility for slaughtering. To prevent the risk of disease transmission, the facilities accept one generation of equal aged chicks at a time. CP pays for, provides and performs vaccinations for all chickens prior to arrival at the facility and during the breeding period, using the Trovac vaccine imported from the United States. CP also provides feed, marketing, and the modern imported equipment used to limit human exposure to the poultry. The facility owners pay off a portion of their debt with the sale of each generation of chickens.

¶19. (SBU) The facilities depend upon modern, automated feeding and cooling systems to limit human-chicken exposure and maintain strict hygiene standards for staff that may come into contact with the birds. To minimize outside exposure, the Binh Phuoc facility requires staff to remain on the facility grounds for the entire 45 day life-cycle of a generation of chicks, while the Dong Nai facility allows workers to leave the facility only on Sundays. Workers take frequent decontamination showers, wear sanitary coverings if they enter chicken houses, change shoes for every third visit and must change clothes when entering the facilities, which are surrounded by barbed-wire topped 10 foot walls. Chickens receive food and water through an automated system controlled

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outside their coops. At both facilities, air enters the coops only through cooling systems that are cleaned every day to eliminate bacteria. The facilities use German technology to dry chicken waste, which they collect and sell to a fertilizer company. The Dong Nai facility maintains a three week buffer between generations of chickens during which it follows a detailed and stringent cleaning and decontamination procedure for the coops, feeding and water troughs.

#### Ducks Not on the Pond: Can Modern Duck Farms Succeed?

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¶10. (SBU) The CP-sponsored 150 million Dong (approximately USD 9,000) pilot duck farm in Binh Duong province may provide new tools for the Vietnamese poultry sector's efforts to control avian influenza in the duck population. Traditionally, Vietnamese duck breeders have focused on raising smaller, free-range flocks in waterways or flooded rice fields. However, exposure to other duck flocks and wild birds increased the odds of spreading avian influenza. The CP duck farm, again located in a rural area far from human population centers or other breeding sites, was designed to minimize exposure to other birds. The duck farm keeps up to 3,000 ducks in each of two houses for a seven week period after hatching. Unlike free range ducks, these birds do not have access to a body of water and CP is studying the overall health of the ducks raised in containment before fully committing to a modern, self-contained facility, like those already in service for chickens. CP hopes that a self-contained duck farm would, like those for chickens, eliminate exposure to avian influenza and other diseases through minimal contact with humans and other birds, together with strong monitoring and complete vaccinations. At the facility, ducks receive two series of vaccinations, at 14 days and at 35 days, administered by CP with observers from the provincial Department of Animal Health. According to CP, to date, the six month old facility has had success, with a low death rate and high average bird weight for the first generation.

Comment

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¶11. (SBU) Self-contained, modern facilities, possibly combined with continued, well-organized vaccination programs, may form the basis for long-term efforts to control avian influenza. Certainly, local authorities feel that way. Indeed, commercial operations with strong bio-security practices should limit exposure to the disease and are a necessary upgrade to Vietnam's poultry-raising practices. A well-maintained and -monitored poultry husbandry system may limit the need for continued, costly vaccinations. However, these pricey facilities are beyond the means of most Vietnamese chicken farmers, particularly those who raise small backyard flocks for the family table or small-scale trading. And, we find it likely that some commercial operations do not follow CP's model hygiene practices. Self-contained facilities may be a large part of the solution - but figuring out the exact equation will take some time.

¶12. (U) This cable was coordinated with Consulate General Ho Chi

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Minh City.

MICHALAK